



The Florida House of Representatives

Office of the Speaker

Dean Cannon
Speaker

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Growth Management Reform Passes Florida House

Tallahassee, Fla. – CS/HB 7129 today passed the Florida House of Representatives. This legislation aims to reform the laws that currently govern growth management in Florida.

“I applaud Representative Workman for his dedication to seeing this important legislation through the process,” said House Speaker Dean Cannon (R-Winter Park). “The current laws that govern growth management in our state are outdated and irrelevant to today’s Florida and they place unnecessary, stringent regulations on local governments making the system rigid and slow to respond to economic development activities. This legislation corrects that imbalance by providing needed flexibility to local governments and reducing overly burdensome oversight by the state.”

CS/HB 7129 proposes changes to the comprehensive plan amendment process by changing the statutory requirements of local comprehensive plans, including removing the twice a year limitation on local government adoption of plan amendments. The legislation also expands the expedited plan amendment process instituted via pilot in 2007, while retaining the more extensive review of plans for newly formed cities, plan amendments that impact areas of critical state concern, and large-scale rural, undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas.

“This legislation modernizes Florida’s growth management system by removing layers of state oversight and one-size fits all solutions, and gives local governments the flexibility and control to implement locally relevant approaches to growth management, while refocusing the role of the state on protecting resources and facilities of state significance,” said Representative Ritch Workman (R-Melbourne), sponsor of CS/HB 7129. “These changes are necessary to enable

local governments to quickly respond to economic opportunities rather than having to cut through multiple layers of bureaucratic red tape.”

The legislation also limits the scope of state review of local comprehensive plan and plan amendments as well as challenges to local comprehensive plan and plan amendments to encompass, for the most part, only impacts to state resources and facilities. Additionally, it increases local government access to large-scale planning tools, such as sector plans and rural land stewardship areas and eliminates certain areas of state required concurrency. Local governments will have a choice to maintain or implement similar concepts at the local level.

“The realities of our struggling economy make it essential that we reform our growth management laws in a way that encourages economic development, rather than hinders it,” said Representative Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange), chair of the House Economic Affairs Committee. “Unlike the 70s and 80s when Florida’s current growth management laws were initially instituted, local governments are now well-prepared to take the lead on implementing innovative solutions to manage their own growth as well as assess and respond to economic development opportunities that they are presented with.”

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